

REMARKS

Claims 1-4, 6-10, 12-16 and 18 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 6, 7, 12, 13 and 18 were amended, and Claims 5, 11 and 17 were canceled. More particularly, Claims 1, 7 and 13 were amended to recite the subject matter of Claims 5, 11 and 17, respectively. Reconsideration of the claims is respectfully requested.

I. Allowable Subject Matter

In the Office Action, the Examiner stated that Applicant's Claims 5-6, 11-12 and 17-18 respectively contain allowable subject matter. Applicant, through his attorney expresses appreciation to the Examiner for this statement. In view thereof, Applicant has amended independent Claim 1 to recite the patentable subject matter of Claim 5, now canceled. Similarly, independent Claims 7 and 13 have been amended to recite the patentable subject matter of canceled Claims 11 and 17, respectively. Accordingly, Claims 1, 7 and 13, as amended herein, are now considered to be allowable over the prior art. Moreover, Claims 2-4 and 6 respectively depend from amended Claim 1, Claims 8-10 and 12 respectively depend from amended Claim 7, and Claims 14-16 and 18 respectively depend from amended Claim 13. Accordingly, each of these dependent claims is likewise considered to be allowable over the prior art. Favorable action is respectfully requested.

II. 35 U.S.C. § 103, Obviousness

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-4, 7-10, and 13-16 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,438,592, to Killian, in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,185,598, to Farber et al. Applicants respectfully consider this rejection to be overcome by the amendments to the claims made herein.

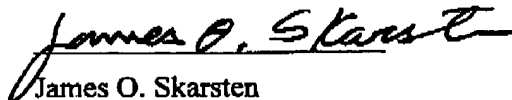
III. Conclusion

It is respectfully urged that the subject application is patentable over the Killian and Farber et al. references, and is now in condition for allowance.

The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number if in the opinion of the Examiner such a telephone conference would expedite or aid the prosecution and examination of this application.

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Respectfully submitted,



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